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Discourse 1

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DISCOURSES
ON
UNIVERSITY EDUCATION.

ADDRESSED TO
THE CATHOLICS OF DUBLIN.

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DISCOURSE I.

INTRODUCTORY.



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DISCOURSE I.

INTRODUCTION.

IN addressing myself to the consideration of a question which has excited so much interest, and elicited so much discussion at the present day, as that of University Education, I feel some explanation is due from me for supposing, after such high ability and wide experience have been brought to bear upon it in both countries, that any field remains for the additional labours either of a disputant or of an inquirer. If, nevertheless, I still venture to ask permission to continue the discussion, already so protracted, it is because the subject of Liberal Education, and of the principles on which it must be conducted, has ever had a hold upon my mind; and because I have lived the greater part of my life in a place which has all that time been occupied in a

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series of controversies among its own people and with strangers, and of measures, experimental or definitive, bearing upon it. About fifty years since, the Protestant University, of which I was so long a member, after a century of inactivity, at length was roused, at a time when (as I may say) it was giving no education at all to the youth committed to its keeping, to a sense of the responsibilities which its profession and its station involved; and it presents to us the singular example of an heterogeneous and an independent body of men, setting about a work of self-reformation, not from any pressure of public opinion, but because it was fitting and right to undertake it. Its initial efforts, begun and carried on amid many obstacles, were met from without, as often happens in such cases, by ungenerous and jealous criticisms, which were at that very moment beginning to be unjust. Controversy did but bring out more clearly to its own apprehension, the views on which its reformation was proceeding, and throw them into a philosophical form. The course of beneficial change made progress, and what was at first but the result of individual energy and an act of the academical corporation, gradually became popular, and was taken up and carried out by the separate collegiate bodies, of which the University is composed. This was the first stage of the controversy. Years passed away, and then political adversaries arose, and a political contest was waged; but still, as that

contest was conducted in great measure through the medium, not of political acts, but of treatises and pamphlets, it happened as before that the threatened dangers, in the course of their repulse, did but afford fuller development and more exact delineation to the principles of which the University was the representative.

Living then so long as a witness, though hardly as an actor, in these scenes of intellectual conflict, I am able, Gentlemen, to bear witness to views of University Education, without authority indeed in themselves, but not without value to a Catholic, and less familiar to him, as I conceive, than they deserve to be. And, while an argument originating in them may be serviceable at this season to that great cause in which we are just now so especially interested, to me personally it will afford satisfaction of a peculiar kind ; for, though it has been my lot for many years to take a prominent, sometimes a presumptuous, part in theological discussions, yet the natural turn of my mind carries me off to trains of thought like those which I am now about to open, which, important though they be for Catholic objects, and admitting of a Catholic treatment, are sheltered from the extreme delicacy and peril which attach to disputations directly bearing on the subject matter of Divine Revelation.

What must be the general character of those views of University Education to which I have alluded, and

of which I shall avail myself, can hardly be doubtful, Gentlemen, considering the circumstances under which I am addressing you. I should not propose to avail myself of a philosophy which I myself had gained from an heretical seat of learning, unless I felt that that philosophy was Catholic in its ultimate source, and befitting the mouth of one who is taking part in a great Catholic work ; nor, indeed, should I refer at all to the views of men who, however distinguished in this world, were not and are not blessed with the light of true doctrine, except for one or two special reasons, which will form, I trust, my sufficient justification in so doing. One reason is this : It would concern me, Gentlemen, were I supposed to have got up my opinions for the occasion. This, indeed, would have been no reflection on me personally, supposing I were persuaded of their truth, when at length addressing myself to the inquiry ; but it would have destroyed, of course, the force of my testimony, and deprived such arguments, as I might adduce, of that moral persuasiveness which attends on tried and sustained conviction. It would have made me seem the advocate, rather than the cordial and deliberate maintainer and witness of the doctrines which I was to support ; and while it undoubtedly exemplified the faith I reposed in the practical judgment of the Church, and the intimate concurrence of my own reason with the course she had authoritatively sanctioned, and the devotion with which I could promptly

put myself at her disposal, it would have cast suspicion on the validity of reasonings and conclusions which rested on no independent inquiry, and appealed to no past experience. In that case it might have been plausibly objected by opponents that I was the serviceable expedient of an emergency, and never could be more than ingenious and adroit in the management of an argument which was not my own, and which I was sure to forget again as readily as I had mastered it. But this is not so. The views to which I have referred have grown into my whole system of thought, and are, as it were, part of myself. Many changes has my mind gone through ; here it has known no variation or vacillation of opinion, and though this by itself is no proof of truth, it puts a seal upon conviction, and is a justification of earnestness and zeal. The principles, which I can now set forth under the sanction of the Catholic Church, were my profession at that early period of my life, when religion was to me more a matter of feeling and experience than of faith. They did but take greater hold upon me as I was introduced to the records of Christian Antiquity, and approached in sentiment and desire to Catholicism ; and my sense of their truth has been increased with the experience of every year since I have been brought within its pale.

And here I am brought to a second and more important reason for introducing what I have to say on the subject of Liberal Education with this refer-

ence to my personal testimony concerning it ; and it is as follows : In proposing to treat of so grave a matter, I have felt vividly that some apology was due from me for introducing the lucubrations of Protestants into what many men might consider almost a question of dogma, and I have said to myself about myself : “ You think it, then, worth while to come all this way, in order, from your past experience, to recommend principles which had better be left to the decision of the theological schools ! ” The force of this objection you will see more clearly by considering the answer I proceed to give to it.

Let it be observed, then, that the principles I would maintain on the subject of Liberal Education, although those as I believe of the Catholic Church, are such as may be gained by the mere experience of life. They do not simply come of theology—they imply no supernatural discernment—they have no special connection with Revelation ; they will be found to be almost self-evident when stated, and to arise out of the nature of the case ; they are dictated by that human prudence and wisdom which is attainable where grace is quite away, and recognized by simple common sense, even where self-interest is not present to sharpen it ; and, therefore, though true, and just, and good in themselves, though sanctioned and used by Catholicism, they argue nothing whatever for the sanctity or faith of those who maintain them. They may be held by Protestants as well as

by Catholics; they may, accidentally, in certain times and places, be taught by Protestants to Catholics, without any derogation from the claim which Catholics make to special spiritual illumination. This being the case, I may without offence, on the present occasion, when speaking to Catholics, appeal to the experience of Protestants; I may trace up my own distinct convictions on the subject to a time when apparently I was not even approximating to Catholicism; I may deal with the question, as I really believe it to be, as one of philosophy, practical wisdom, good sense, not of theology; and, such as I am, I may, notwithstanding, presume to treat of it in the presence of those who, in every religious sense, are my fathers and my teachers.

Nay, not only may the true philosophy of Education be held by Protestants, and at a given time, or in a given place, be taught by them to Catholics, but further than this, there is nothing strange in the idea, that here or there, at this time or that, it should be understood better, and held more firmly by Protestants than by ourselves. The very circumstance that it is founded on truths in the natural order, accounts for the possibility of its being sometimes or somewhere understood outside the Church, more accurately than within her fold. Where the sun shines bright, in the warm climate of the south, the natives of the place know little of safeguards against cold and wet. They have, indeed, bleak and

piercing blasts; they have chill and pouring rain; but only now and then, for a day or a week; they bear the inconvenience as they best may, but they have not made it an art to repel it; it is not worth their while; the science of calefaction and ventilation is reserved for the north. It is in this way that Catholics stand relatively to Protestants in the science of Education; Protestants are obliged to depend on human means solely, and they are, therefore, led to make the most of them; it is their sole resource to use what they have; "Knowledge is" their "power" and nothing else; they are the anxious cultivators of a rugged soil. It is otherwise with us; *funes ceciderunt mihi in præclaris*. We have a goodly inheritance. The Almighty Father takes care of us; He has promised to do so; His word cannot fail, and we have continual experience of its fulfilment. This is apt to make us, I will not say, rely too much on prayer, on the Divine Word and Blessing, for we cannot pray too much, or expect too much from our great Lord; but we sometimes forget that we shall please Him best, and get most from Him, when we use what we have in nature to the utmost, at the same time that we look out for what is beyond nature in the confidence of faith and hope. However, we are sometimes tempted to let things take their course, as if they would in one way or another turn up right at last for certain; and so we go on, getting into difficulties and getting out of them, succeeding

certainly on the whole, but with failure in detail which might be avoided, and with much of imperfection or inferiority in our appointments and plans, and much disappointment, discouragement, and collision of opinion in consequence. We leave God to fight our battles, and so He does ; but He corrects us while He prospers us. We cultivate the innocence of the dove more than the wisdom of the serpent ; and we exemplify our Lord's word and incur His rebuke, when He declared that " the children of this world were in their generation wiser than the children of light".

It is far from impossible, then, at first sight, that on the subject before us, Protestants may have discerned the true line of action, and estimated its importance aright. It is possible that they have investigated and ascertained the main principles, the necessary conditions of education, better than some among ourselves. It is possible at first sight, and it is probable in the particular case, when we consider, on the one hand, the various and opposite positions, which they enjoy relatively to each other ; yet, on the other, the uniformity of the conclusions to which they arrive. The Protestant communions, I need hardly say, are respectively at a greater and a less distance from the Catholic Church, with more or with less of Catholic doctrine and of Catholic principle in them. Supposing, then, it should turn out, on a survey of their opinions and their policy, that in pro-

portion as they approach, in the genius of their religion, to Catholicism, so do they become clear in their enunciation of a certain principle in education, that very circumstance would be an argument, as far as it went, for concluding that in Catholicism itself the recognition of that principle would, in its seats of education, be distinct and absolute. Now, I conceive that this remark applies in the controversy to which I am addressing myself. I must anticipate the course of future remarks so far as to say what you have doubtless, Gentlemen, yourselves anticipated before I say it, that the main principle on which I shall have to proceed is this—that Education must not be disjoined from Religion, or that Mixed Schools, as they are called, in which teachers and scholars are of different religious creeds, none of which, of course, enter into the matter of instruction, are constructed on a false idea. Here, then, I conceive I am right in saying that every sect of Protestants, which has retained the idea of religious truth and the necessity of faith, which has any dogma to profess and any dogma to lose, makes that dogma the basis of its Education, secular as well as religious, and is jealous of those attempts to establish schools of a purely secular character, which the inconvenience of religious differences urges upon politicians of the day. This circumstance is of so striking a nature as in itself to justify me, as I consider, in my proposed appeal in this con-

troversy to arguments and testimony short of Catholic.

Now, Gentlemen, let me be clearly understood here. I know quite well that there are multitudes of Protestants who are advocates for Mixed Education to the fullest extent, even so far as to desire the introduction of Catholics themselves into their colleges and schools; but then, first, they are those for the most part who have no creed or dogma whatever to defend, to sacrifice, to surrender, to compromise, to hold back, or to "mix", when they call out for Mixed Education. There are many Protestants of benevolent tempers and business-like minds, who think that all who are called Christians do in fact agree together in essentials, though they will not allow it; and who, in consequence, call on all parties in educating their youth for the world to eliminate differences, which are certainly prejudicial, as soon as they are proved to be immaterial. It is not surprising that clear-sighted persons should fight against the maintenance and imposition of private judgment in matters of public concern. It is not surprising that statesmen, with a thousand conflicting claims and interests to satisfy, should fondly aim at a forfeited privilege of Catholic times, when they would have had at least one distraction the less in the simplicity of National Education. And next, I can conceive the most consistent men, and the most zealously attached to their own system of doctrine,

nevertheless consenting to schemes of Education from which Religion is altogether or almost excluded, from the stress of necessity, or the recommendations of expedience. Necessity has no law, and expedience is often one form of necessity. It is no principle with sensible men, of whatever cast of opinion, to do always what is abstractedly best. Where no direct duty forbids, we may be obliged to do, as being best under circumstances, what we murmur and rise against, while we do it. We see that to attempt more is to effect less ; that we must accept so much, or gain nothing ; and so perforce we reconcile ourselves to what we would have far otherwise, if we could. Thus a system of Mixed Education may, in a particular place or time, be the least of evils ; it may be of long standing ; it may be dangerous to meddle with ; it may be professedly a temporary arrangement ; it may be in an improving state ; its disadvantages may be neutralised by the persons by whom, or the provisions under which, it is administered.

Protestants then, in matter of fact, are found to be both advocates and promoters of Mixed Education ; but this, as I think will appear on inquiry, only under the conditions I have set down, first, where they have no special attachment to the dogmas which are compromised in the comprehension ; and next, when they find it impossible, much as they may desire it, to carry out their attachment to them in

practice, without prejudicial consequences greater than those which that comprehension involves. Men who profess a religion, if left to themselves, make religious and secular Education one. Where, for instance, shall we find greater diversity of opinion, greater acrimony of mutual opposition, than between the two parties, High Church and Low, which mainly constitute the Established Religion of England and Ireland? Yet those parties, differing, as they do, from each other in other points, are equally opposed to the efforts of politicians to fuse their respective systems of Education with those either of Catholics or of sectaries; and it is only the strong expedience of concord and the will of the state which reconcile them to the necessity of a fusion with each other. Again, we all know into what various persuasions the English constituency is divided—more, indeed, than it is easy to enumerate; yet, since the great majority of that constituency, amid its differences, and in its several professions, distinctly dogmatise, whether it be Anglican, Wesleyan, Calvinistic, or so called Evangelical (as is distinctly shown, if in no other way, by its violence against Catholics), the consequence is, that, in spite of serious political obstacles and of the reluctance of statesmen, it has up to this time been resolute and successful in preventing the national separation of secular and religious Education. This concurrence, then, in various instances, supposing it to exist, as I believe it does, of a dogma-

tic faith on the one hand, and an abhorrence of Mixed Education on the other, is a phenomenon which, though happening among Protestants, demands the attention of Catholics, over and above the argumentative basis, on which, in the instance of each particular sect, this abhorrence would be found to rest.

While then, I conceive that certain Protestant bodies may, under circumstances, decide, more successfully than Catholics of a certain locality or period, a point of religious philosophy or policy, and may so far give us a lesson in perspicacity or prudence, without any prejudice to our claims to the exclusive possession of Revealed Truth, I say, they are in matter of fact likely to have done so in a case like the present, in which, amid all the variety of persuasions into which Protestantism necessarily splits, they agree together in a certain practical conclusion, which each of them in turn sees to be necessary for its own particular maintenance. Nor is there surely anything startling or novel in such an admission. The Church has ever appealed and deferred to testimonies and authorities external to herself, in those matters in which she thought they had means of forming a judgment: and that on the principle *Cuique in sua arte credendum*. She has ever used unbelievers and pagans in evidence of her truth, as far as their testimony went. She avails herself of heretical scholars, critics, and antiquarians. She has worded her theo-

logical teaching in the phraseology of Aristotle; Aquila, Symmachus, Theodotion, Origen, Eusebius, and Apollinaris, all more or less heterodox, have supplied materials for primitive exegetics. St. Cyprian called Tertullian his master; Bossuet, in modern times, complimented the labours of the Anglican Bull; the Benedictine editors of the Fathers are familiar with the labours of Fell, Ussher, Pearson, and Beveridge. Pope Benedict XIV. cites according to the occasion the works of Protestants without reserve, and the late French collection of Christian Apologists contains the writings of Locke, Burnet, Tillotson, and Paley. If then, I come forward in any degree as borrowing the views of certain Protestant schools on the point which is to be discussed, I do so, not, Gentlemen, as supposing that even in philosophy the Catholic Church herself, as represented by her theologians or her schools, has anything to learn from men or bodies of men external to her pale; but as feeling, first, that she has ever, in the plenitude of her divine illumination, made use of whatever truth or wisdom she has found in their teaching or their measures; and next, that in particular times or places some of her children are likely to profit from external suggestions or lessons which are in no sense necessary for herself.

And in thus speaking of human philosophy, I have intimated the mode in which I propose to handle my subject altogether. Observe, then, Gentlemen, I have

no intention of bringing into the argument the authority of the Church at all; but I shall consider the question simply on the grounds of human reason and human wisdom. And from this it follows that, viewing it as a matter of argument, judgment, propriety, and expedience, I am not called upon to deny that in particular cases a course has been before now advisable for Catholics in regard to the education of their youth, and has been, in fact, adopted, which was not abstractedly the best, and is no pattern and precedent for others. Thus in the early ages the Church sanctioned her children in frequenting the heathen schools for the acquisition of secular accomplishments, where, as no one can doubt, evils existed, at least as great as can attend on Mixed Education now. The gravest Fathers recommended for Christian youth the use of Pagan masters; the most saintly Bishops and most authoritative Doctors had been sent in their adolescence by Christian parents to Pagan lecture halls*. And, not to take other instances, at this very time, and in this very country, as regards at least the poorer classes of the community, whose secular acquirements ever must be limited, it has approved itself not only to Protestant state Ecclesiastics, who cannot be supposed to be very sensitive about doctrinal truth, but, as a wise condescension,

* Vide, M. L'Abbé Lalanne's recent work.

even to many of our most venerated Bishops, to suffer, under the circumstances, a system of Mixed Education in the schools called National.

On this part of the question, however, I have not to enter; for I confine myself to the subject of University Education. But even here it would ill have become me to pretend, simply on my own judgment, to decide on a point so emphatically practical, as regards a state of society, about which I have much to learn, on any abstract principles, however true and important. It would have been presumptuous in me so to have acted, nor am I so acting. It is my happiness in a matter of Christian duty, about which the most saintly and the most able may differ, to be guided simply by the decision and recommendation of the Holy See, the judge and finisher of all controversies. That decision indeed, I repeat, shall not enter into my argument; but it is my own reason for arguing. I am trusting my own judgment on the subject, because I find it is the judgment of him who has upon his shoulder the government and the solicitude of all the Churches. I appear before you, Gentlemen, not prior to the decision of Rome on the question of which I am to treat, but after it. My sole aspiration—and I cannot have a higher under the heavens—is to be the servant of the Vicar of Christ. He has sanctioned at this time a particular measure for his children who speak the English tongue, and the distinguished persons by whom it is

to be carried out have honoured me with a share in their work. I take things as I find them ; I know nothing of the past ; I find myself here ; I set myself to the duties I find here ; I set myself to further, by every means in my power, doctrines and views, true in themselves, recognised by all Catholics as such, familiar to my own mind ; and to do this quite apart from the consideration of questions which have been determined without me and before me. I am here the advocate and the minister of a certain great principle ; yet not merely advocate and minister, else had I not been here at all. It has been my previous keen sense and hearty reception of that principle, that has been at once the cause, as I must suppose, of my selection, and the ground of my acquiescence. I am told on authority that a principle is necessary, which I have ever felt to be true. As the royal matron in sacred history consigned the child she had made her own to the charge of its natural mother ; so truths and duties, which come of unaided reason, not of grace, which were already intimately mine by the workings of my own mind, and the philosophy of human schools, are now committed to my care, to nurse and to cherish, by her and for her who, acting on the prerogative of her divinely inspired discernment, has in this instance honoured with a royal adoption the suggestions of reason.

Happy mother, who received her offspring back by giving him up, and gained, at another's word, what

her own most jealous artifices had failed to secure at home! Gentlemen, I have not yet ended the explanations with which I must introduce myself to your notice. If I have been expressing a satisfaction that opinions, early imbibed and long cherished in my own mind, now come to me with the Church's seal upon them, do not imagine that I am indulging a subtle kind of private judgment, especially unbecoming in a Catholic. It would, I think, be unjust to me, were any one to gather, from what I have been saying, that I had so established myself in my own ideas and in my old notions, as a centre of thought, that, instead of coming to the Church to be taught, I was but availing myself of such opportunities as she gave me, to force principles on your attention which I had adopted without her. It would, indeed, be a most unworthy frame of mind, to view her sanction, however it could be got, as a sort of leave or permit, whereby the intellect obtains an outlet, which it is ever coveting, to range freely once in a way, and to enjoy itself in a welcome, because a rare holiday. Not so; human wisdom, at the very best, even in matters of religious policy, is principally but a homage, certainly no essential service to Divine Truth. Nor is the Church some stern mistress, practised only in refusal and prohibition, to be obeyed grudgingly and dexterously overreached; but a kind and watchful teacher and guide, encouraging us forward in the path of truth amid the perils which beset

it. Deeply do I feel, ever will I protest, for I can appeal to the ample testimony of history to bear me out, that, in questions of right and wrong there is nothing really strong in the whole world, nothing decisive and operative, but the voice of him, to whom have been committed the keys of the kingdom and the oversight of Christ's flock. That voice is now, as ever it has been, a real authority, infallible when it teaches, prosperous when it commands, ever taking the lead wisely and distinctly in its own province, adding certainty to what is probable, and persuasion to what is certain. Before it speaks, the most saintly may mistake; and after it has spoken, the most gifted must obey.

I have said this in explanation; but it has an application if you will let me so say, far beyond myself. Perhaps we have all need to be reminded, in one way or another, as regards our habitual view of things, if not our formal convictions, of the greatness of authority and the intensity of power, which accompany the decisions of the Holy See. I can fancy, Gentlemen, among those who hear me there may be those who would be willing to acquit the principles of Education which I am to advocate of all fault whatever, except that of being impracticable. I can fancy them to grant to me, that those principles are most correct and most obvious, simply irresistible on paper, yet, after all, nothing more than the dreams of men who live out of the world, and who do not see

the difficulty of keeping Catholicism anyhow afloat on the bosom of this wonderful nineteenth century. Proved, indeed, those principles are to demonstration, but they will not work. Nay, it was my own admission just now, that, in a particular instance, it might easily happen that what is only second best is best practically, because what is actually best is out of the question. This, I hear you say to yourselves, is the state of things at present. You recount in detail the numberless impediments, great and small, threatening and vexatious, which at every step embarrass the attempt to carry out ever so poorly a principle in itself so true and ecclesiastical. You appeal in your defence to wise and sagacious intellects, who are far from enemies, if not to Catholicism, at least to the Irish Hierarchy, and you simply despair, or rather you absolutely disbelieve, that Education can possibly be conducted, here and now, on a theological principle, or that youths of different religions can, in matter of fact, be educated apart from each other. The more you think over the state of politics, the position of parties, the feelings of classes, and the experience of the past, the more chimerical does it seem to you to aim at anything beyond a University of Mixed Instruction. Nay, even if the attempt could accidentally succeed, would not the mischief exceed the benefits of it? How great the sacrifice, in how many ways, by which it would be preceded and followed!—how many wounds, open

and secret, would it inflict upon the body politic ! And, if it fails, which is to be expected, then a double mischief will ensue from its recognition of evils which it has been unable to remedy. These are your deep misgivings ; and, in proportion to the force with which they come to you, is the concern and anxiety which they occasion you, that there should be those whom you love, whom you revere, who from one cause or other refuse to enter into them.

This, I repeat, is what some good Catholics will say to me, and more than this. They will express themselves better than I can speak for them—with more nature and point, with more force of argument and fulness of detail ; and I will frankly and at once acknowledge, Gentlemen, that I do not mean here to give a direct answer to their objections. I do not say an answer cannot be given ; on the contrary, I may have a confident expectation that, in proportion as those objections are looked in the face, they will fade away. But, however this may be, it would not become me to argue the matter with those who understand the circumstances of the problem so much better than myself. What do I know of the state of things in Ireland that I should presume to put ideas of mine, which could not be right except by accident, by the side of theirs, who speak in the country of their birth and their home ? No, Gentlemen, you are natural judges of the difficulties which beset us, and

they are doubtless greater than I can even fancy or forebode. Let me, for the sake of argument, admit all you say against our enterprise, and a great deal more. Your proof of its intrinsic impossibility shall be to me as demonstrative as my own of its theological correctness. Why then should I be so rash and perverse as to involve myself in trouble not properly mine? Why go out of my own place? How is it that I do not know when I am well off? Why so headstrong and reckless as to lay up for myself miscarriage and disappointment, as though I had not enough of my own?

Considerations such as these might have been simply decisive in time past for the boldest and most able among us ; now, however, I have one resting point, just one, one plea which serves me in the stead of all direct argument whatever, which hardens me against censure, which encourages me against fear, and to which I shall ever come round, when I hear the question of the practicable and the expedient brought into discussion. After all, Peter has spoken. Peter is no recluse, no abstracted student, no dreamer about the past, no doter upon the dead and gone, no projector of the visionary. Peter for eighteen hundred years has lived in the world ; he has seen all fortunes, he has encountered all adversaries, he has shaped himself for all emergencies. If there ever was a power on earth who had an eye for the times, who has confined himself to the practicable, and has been happy in his an-

ticipations, whose words have been deeds, and whose commands prophecies, such is he in the history of ages who sits on from generation to generation in the Chair of the Apostles as the Vicar of Christ and Doctor of His Church.

Notions, then, taught me long ago by others, long cherished in my own mind, these are not my confidence. Their truth does not make them feasible, nor their reasonableness persuasive. Rather, I would meet the objector by an argument of his own sort. If you tell me this work will fail, I will make answer, the worker is apt to succeed, and I trust in my knowledge of the past more than in your prediction of the future. It was said by an old philosopher, who declined to reply to an emperor's arguments, "It is not safe controverting with the master of twenty legions". What Augustus had in the material order, that, and much more, has Peter in the spiritual. Peter has spoken by Pius, and when was Peter ever unequal to the occasion? When has he not risen with the crisis? What dangers have ever daunted him? What sophistry foiled him? What uncertainties misled him? When did ever any power go to war with Peter, material or moral, civilized or savage, and got the better? When did the whole world ever band together against him solitary, and not find him too many for them?

These are not the words of rhetoric, Gentlemen, but of history. All who take part with Peter are on

the winning side. The Apostle says not in order to unsay, for he has inherited that word which is with power. From the first he has looked through the wide world, of which he has the burden, and according to the need of the day, and the inspirations of his Lord, he has set himself, now to one thing, now to another, but to all in season, and to nothing in vain. He came first upon an age of refinement and luxury like our own, and in spite of the persecutor fertile in the resources of his cruelty, he soon gathered, out of all classes of society, the slave, the soldier, the high-born lady, and the sophist, to form a people for his Master's honour. The savage hordes came down in torrents from the north, hideous even to look upon; and Peter went out with holy water and with benison, and by his very eye he sobered them and backed them in full career. They turned aside, and flooded the whole earth, but only to be more surely civilized by him, and to be made ten times more his children even than the older populations they had overwhelmed. Lawless kings arose, sagacious as the Roman, passionate as the Hun, yet in him they found their match, and were shattered, and he lived on. The gates of the earth were opened to the east and west, and men poured out to take possession; and he and his went with them, swept along by zeal and charity as far as they by enterprise, covetousness, or ambition. Has he failed in his successes up to this hour? Did he, in our fathers' day,

fail in his struggle with Joseph of Germany and his confederates, with Napoleon, a greater name, and his dependent kings, that, though in another kind of fight, he should fail in ours? What grey hairs are on the head of Judah, whose youth is renewed like the eagle's, whose feet are like the feet of harts, and underneath the everlasting Arms?

In the first centuries of the Church all this was a mere point of faith, but every age as it has come has stayed up faith by sight ; and shame on us if, with the accumulated witness of eighteen centuries, our eyes are too gross to see what the Saints have ever anticipated. Education, Gentlemen, involved as it is in the very idea of a religion such as ours, cannot be a strange work at any time in the hands of the Vicar of Christ. The heathen forms of religion thought it enough to amuse and quiet the populace with spectacles, and, on the other hand, to bestow a dignity and divine sanction upon the civil ruler; but Catholicism addresses itself directly to the heart and conscience of the individual. The Religion which numbers Baptism and Penance among its sacraments, cannot be neglectful of the soul's training; the Creed which opens and resolves into so majestic and so living a theology, cannot but subserve the cultivation of the intellect; the Revelation which tells us of truths otherwise utterly hid from us, cannot be justly called the enemy of knowledge; the Worship, which is so awful and so

thrilling, cannot but feed the aspirations of genius, and move the affections from their depths. The Institution, which has flourished in centuries the most famed for mental activity and cultivation, which has come into collision, to say no more, with the schools of Antioch and Alexandria, Athens and Edessa, Saracenic Seville, and Protestant Berlin, cannot be wanting in experience what to do now, and when to do it. He whom the Almighty left behind to be His representative on earth, has ever been jealous, as beseemed him, as of God's graces, so also of His gifts. He has been as tender of the welfare and interests of human science as he is loyal to the divine truth which is his peculiar charge. He has ever been the foster-father of secular knowledge, and has rejoiced in its growth, while he has pruned away its self-destructive luxuriance.

Least of all can the Catholics of two islands, which have been heretofore so singularly united in the cultivation and diffusion of Knowledge, under the auspices of the Apostolic See, we surely, Gentlemen, are not the persons to distrust its wisdom and its fortune when it sends us on a similar mission now. I cannot forget, Gentlemen, that at a time when Celt and Saxon were alike savage, it was the See of Peter that gave both of them first faith, and then civilization; and then, again, bound them together in one by the seal of that joint commission which it gave them to convert and illuminate in turn the pagan Continent. I cannot forget how it was from Rome that the

glorious St. Patrick was sent to Ireland, and did a work so great, that he may be said to have had no successor in it; the sanctity, and learning, and zeal, and charity which followed being but the result of the one impulse which he gave. I cannot forget how, in no long time, under the fostering breath of the Vicar of Christ, a country of heathen superstitions became the very wonder and asylum of all people;—the wonder by reason of its knowledge, sacred and profane; the asylum for religion, literature, and science, chased away from the Continent by barbaric invaders. I recollect its hospitality freely accorded to the pilgrim; its volumes munificently presented to the foreign student; and the prayers, and blessings, and holy rites, and solemn chants, which sanctified the while both giver and receiver. Nor can I forget how my own England had meanwhile become the solicitude of the same unwearied Eye; how Augustine was sent to us by Gregory; how he fainted in the way in terror at our barbarian name, and, but for the Pope, had returned as from an impossible expedition; how he was forced on “in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling”, until he had achieved the conquest of all England to Christ. Nor, how it came to pass that, when Augustine died and his work slackened, another Pope, unwearied still, sent three great Saints from Rome to educate and refine the people he had converted. Three holy men set out for England together, of different nations; Theodore, an Asiatic

Greek, from Tarsus ; Adrian, an African ; Bennett alone a Saxon, for Peter knows no distinction of races in his ecumenical work ; they came with theology and science in their train ; with relics, and with pictures, and with manuscripts of the Holy Fathers and the Greek classics ; and Theodore and Adrian founded schools, secular and religious, all over England, while Bennett brought to the north the large library he had collected in foreign parts, and, with plans and ornamental work from France, erected a church of stone, under the invocation of St. Peter, after the Roman fashion, "which", says the historian,* "he most affected". I call to mind how St. Wilfrid, St. John of Beverly, St. Bede, and other saintly men, carried on the good work in the following generations, and how from that time forth the two islands, England and Ireland, in a dark and dreary age, were the two lights of Christendom ; and nothing passed between them, and no personal aims were theirs, save the interchange of kind offices and the rivalry of love.

O ! memorable time when St. Aidan and the Irish Monks went up to Lindisfarne and Melrose, and taught the Saxon youth, and a St. Cuthbert and a St. Eata repaid their gracious toil ! O ! blessed days of peace and confidence, when Mailduf penetrated to Malmesbury in the south, which has inherited his name, and founded there the famous school which

gave birth to the great St. Aldhelm! O ! precious seal and testimony of Gospel charity, when, as Aldhelm in turn tells us, the English went to Ireland “ numerous as bees ”; when the Saxon St. Egbert and St. Willibrod, preachers to the heathen Frisons, made the voyage to Ireland to prepare themselves for their work ; and when from Ireland went forth to Germany the two noble Ewalds, Saxons also, to earn the crown of martyrdom. Such a period, indeed, so rich in grace, in peace, in love, and in good works, could only last for a season ; but, even when the light was to pass away, the two sister islands were destined not to forfeit, but to transfer it. The time came when a neighbouring country was in turn to hold the mission they have so long and so well fulfilled ; and, when to it they made over their honourable office, faithful to the alliance of two hundred years, they did the solemn act together. High up in the north, upon the Tyne, the pupil of St. Theodore, St. Adrian, and St. Bennett, for forty years was Bede, the light of the whole western world ; as happy, too, in his scholars round about him, as in his celebrity and influence in the length and breadth of Christendom. And, a generation before him, St. John of Beverly, taught by the same masters, had for thirty years been shedding the lustre of his sanctity and learning upon the Archiepiscopal school of York. Among the pupils of these celebrated men the learned Alcuin stood first; but Alcuin, not content even

with the training which Saints could give him, betook himself to the sister island, and remained a whole twelve years in the Irish schools. When Charlemagne would revive science and letters in his own France, to England he sent for masters, and to the cloisters of St. John Beverly and St. Bede; and Alcuin, the scholar both of the Saxon and the Celt, was the chief of those who went forth to supply the need of the Great Emperor. Such was the foundation of the school of Paris, from which, in the course of centuries, sprang the famous University, the glory of the middle ages.

The past never returns; the course of things, old in its texture, is ever new in its colouring and fashion. Ireland and England are not what they once were, but Rome is where it was; Peter is the same; his zeal, his charity, his mission, his gifts, are the same. He, of old time, made us one by making us joint teachers of the nations; and now, surely, he is giving us a like mission, and we shall become one again, while we zealously and lovingly fulfil it.

